

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01
OPR-02 SY-05 MCT-01 SSM-03 COME-00 TRSE-00 OC-06
CCO-00 ACDA-12 SCS-06 /096 W
-----101196 191352Z /43

O R 191244Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7046
USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 1762

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS SHUM IR
SUBJ: RIOTS IN TABRIZ, ELSEWHERE OVER 40 DAY ANNIVERSARY OF
QOM KILLINGS

REF: TEHRAN 1710

SUMMARY: MORNING AFTER SURVEY SHOWS DAMAGE FROM FEB 18 TABRIZ
RIOTS WAS WIDESPREAD N TABRIZ. VIRTUALLY ALL BANKS VANDALIZED,
MANY STORES GUTTED AND SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC OFFICES
DESTROYED. ARMY WAS CALLED IN MORNING FEB 18 AND REMAINS IN
CONTROL OF CITY. BAZAAR AND ALL SHOPS EXCEPT FOOD STORES
CLOSED. GOI VERY TIGHT LIPPED ABOUT EVENTS,, WHICH MEDIA
TREATED FEB 19 AS MERELY LARGE BAZAAR RIOT. SOUNDINGS BY
CONSULATE TABRIZ INDICATE CROWDS HAD SOME WEAPONS AND THERE
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WERE CASUALTIES, BUT NO ONE IS SAYING HOW MANY. FURTHER
REPORTS CONFIRM REFTTEL'S DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS IN SHIRAZ,
ISFAHAN. BAZAARS CLOSED IN TEHRAN AND ISFAHAN, OPEN IN
SHIRAZ. TABRIZ EVENTS VERY TENTATIVELY BEING LAID TO SUR-
PRISINGLY WELL ORGANIZED MOSLEM FANATICS. END SUMMARY.

1. US CONSUL METRINKO TOURED MAIN AREAS OF TABRIZ--ARMY

HAS SEALED OFF MORE CONSERVATIVE AREAS FOR TIME BEING--AND REPORTS EXTENSIVE DAMAGE. THREE MEDIUM SIZED POLICE STATION TOTALLY DESTROYED, MANY MUNICIPAL BUILDING HIT, VIRTUALLY ALL BANKS BROKEN INTO, AND TEN OF 30 GUTTED. IAS BINATIONAL CENTER WAS ONLY BUILDING HIT ON ITS STREET. THIS PLUS PATTERNS OF SHOP DESTRUCTION AND BREAK INS SUGGEST TO IRANIANS IN TABRIZ AND TO OUR CONSUL THAT RIOTS WERE BETTER ORGANIZED THAN ORIGINALLY THOUGHT POSSIBLE. ALL HOTELS HAVE GROUND FLOOR WINDOWS OUT, AND 20-30 SHOPS NEAREST CENTER OF TOWN WERE GUTTED AFTER EXTENSIVE GUNFIGHT WHICH CENTERED ON MUNICIPALITY BUILDING.

2. ARMY REMAINS IN CONTROL OF TOWN; POLICE WERTLOADUALLY RETIRED FROM CITY AS ARMY TOOK OVER DURING LATE MORNING FEB 18, AND ONLY A FEW POLICEMEN ARE BEING SEEN ON STREETS FEB 19. CONSUL SAYS NUMBER OF UNVERIFIABLE STORIES INDICATE ELEMENTS IN CROWDS HAD WEAPONS.

3. GOI OFFICIALS ARE VERY RETICENT TO TALK ABOUT EVENTS. ENGLISH AND FARSI PRESS USED PARS NEWS AGENCY INFO WHICH CHARACTERIZED MOB AS "GROUPS OF HOOLIGANS" WITH SOME SELF-PROCLAIMED "ISLAMIC-MARXISTS AMONG THEM, WHO DESTROYED PROPERTY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEHRAN 1762

LOCAL PRESS PLAY INCLUDED COMMENT: "CERTAINLY FOREIGN ELEMENTS WERE BEHIND THE INCIDENT, "BUT NO DETAILS WERE GIVEN. GENERAL BELIEF IN TABRIZ IS THAT THERE WERE CASUALTIES, AND UNCONFIRMED REPORT TO CONSUL INDICATED BODIES WERE BEING BURIED IN TABRIZ CEMETERY FEB 19.

4. EVEN THOUGH GOI IS NOT COMMENTING, EVIDENCE SO FAR SUGGESTS THAT TABRIZ VIOLENCE IS WORK OF FANATICAL MOSLEMS. WE AND BRITISH BELIEVE THERE WAS PROBABLY NO DIRECT FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT, BUT WOULD NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY THAT ALL OR PART OF RIOT LEADERSHIP IN TABRIZ HAD RECEIVED TRAINING ABROAD.

5. IN TEHRAN, BAZAAR WAS CLOSED OFFICIALLY, PRESUMABLY TO PREVENT SYMPATHETIC ECHOES F TABRIZ. TEHRAN BAZAAR REMAINED CONFIDENTIAL

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OPEN FEB 18, BUT SITUATION AS DESCRIBED BY OBSERVER WAS TENSE, WITH SUBSTANTIAL POLICE PRESENCE.

6. SHIRAZ CONSUL TOMSETH CONFIRMED THAT THERE WAS SUBSTANTIAL DEMONSTRATION AT PAHLAVI UNIVERSITY ARTS AND SCIENCE FACULTY FEB 18, WITH SHOULTS OF "LONG LIVE KHOMEINI AND "WE DON'T WANT THE SHAH". RUMOR HAS IT THAT ONE STUDENT WAS SHOT, AND RELIABLE EYEWITNESS SAW BLOOD ON FLOOR OF BUILDING AFTER POLICE MOVED IN WITH CLUBS TO BREAK UP DEMONSTRATION. SHIRAZ BAZAAR WAS OPEN FEB 10, AND DESPITE RUMORS, CONSUL COULD FIND NO EVIDENCE OF OTHER DISTURBANCES. SHOOTING OCCURRED AT BAZAAR FEB 18, BUT NO HARD FACTS AVAILABLE EITHER WAY, AND REFTEL REPORT BELIEVED ESSENTIALLY CORRECT.

7. IN ISFAHAN, CIRCULARS WENT OUT FEB 17 CALLING FOR MOURNING FEB 18, AND POLICE ON STREETS THERE REINFORCED. CIRCULARS WERE PRE PRINTED WITH AT LEAST FIVE NAMES OF QOM DEAD. CONSUL MC GAFFEY IS ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN NAMES USED. BAZAAR WAS CLOSED FEB 18, BUT SOME SHOPS REOPENED FEB 19. CONSUL INDICATES THERE WERE AND ARE NO INDICATORS OF FURTHER TROUBLE SUCH AS PRECEDE MAJOR DISTURBANCES, AND CITY REMAINS CALM, THOUGH SEVERAL PRIVATE STORES WERE CLOSED FEB 18.

8. BRITISH COLLEAGUE HAS HEARD THAT THERE WILL BE A CITY WIDE INDUSTRIAL STRIKE IN SAVEH FEB 19, IN SYMPATHY WITH QOM DEAD, BUT FURTHER INFO LACKING.

9. EMB COMMENT: IT IS STILL TOO EARLY, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF GOI RETICENCE TO DISCUSS MATTERS AND OFFICIAL INSISTENCE THAT TABRIZ EVENTS WERE MERELY LARGE BAZAAR RIOT,

TO GIVE DEFINITIVE ANALYSIS OF EVENTS. WE DO NOT REPEAT NOT
KNOW IF LEFTIST ELEMENTS WERE INVOLVED IN VIOLENCE OR WHETHER
ENTIRE AFFAIR WAS REACTIONARY MOSLEM SHOW. EXTENT OF CASUALTIES
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ALSO UNCLEAR, HOWEVER, TABRIZ BROUHAHA WAS NO MERE BAZAAR
RIOT, AND NECESSITY OF CALLING IOOPS HAS UNDOUBTEDLY
CAUSED GOI TO BEGIN CONSIDERING IMPLICATION OF EVENTS. INFO
CONSUL METRINKO HAS PIECED TOGETHER SUGGESTS AT FIRST CUT
THAT MOB WAS WELL ORGANIZED AND DESTRUCTION WAS NOT RANDOM,
BUT WELL PLANNED. OF COURSE, VERY FACT THINGS GOT TO THE RIOT
STAGE SUGGESTS CONTINUING GOI RELUCTANCE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS
TO CRACK DOWN HARD ON RELIGIOUS MILITANTS.
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